

SAFEGUARDING

MODULE 1

Our key recommendations are that:

- Recruitment advertising and applicants' information contain a prominent safeguarding statement
- The job description is clear and precise
- The person specification is clear, specific and includes safeguarding information
- Written references are taken up at shortlisting stage prior to interview



Neglect may involve:

1. Failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger

2. Failing to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate caretakers or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglecting, or not responding to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

- It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.
- It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another, serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or their exploitation or corruption. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse occurs in all incidents of sexual abuse due to the deceit employed by the abuser in targeting, manipulating and exploiting the child. The fact that the abuser is, sometimes, someone in a position of trust compounds the psychological impact on the victim.

Emotional abuse can occur on its own; for example, in cases where a child is consistently singled out for negative attention by a staff member or whose need for protection and/or assistance is consistently ignored.

Bullying, harassment, ridicule, and discrimination can all amount to emotional abuse and schools should have a clear policy that all such behaviour is unacceptable particularly on the part of members of staff.

Sex abuse

[1] motivation to abuse

Develops over years. Emotional connection with children and blockage to intimate adult relationships

[2] overcoming conscience: Convince themselves that sexual contact with children is OK. Observe children's behaviour

[3] grooming adults: To convince others that they are respectable and accepted. Deflect any suspicion of wrongdoing.

[4] grooming children. Relationship with several first. Test boundaries of each child. Tests each child's boundaries

Child sex abusers exploit the trust that children implicitly have in anyone associated with their school. This trust is misused to develop inappropriate relationships with

children who are vulnerable, or who can be manipulated by the abuser to comply with his/her wishes.

Sex abusers may target those children in whom they detect particular vulnerabilities. For example those who have an unhappy home life, or who have been abused previously, or who have been bullied, or are immature and lack friends.

These children are more likely to need and want adult support and friendship. Abusers can exploit this neediness to form inappropriate relationships for their own gratification.

Children from more supportive and caring family backgrounds may still be targeted for sexual abuse, especially if they are under-assertive, experiencing personal difficulties or if they believe that their good progress is dependent upon their relationship with a particular staff member.

Physical abuse is more common in schools than sexual abuse. However, unlike many sexual abusers, those who physically harm children are unlikely to seek employment in a school in order to further an agenda of abuse.

Physical abuse may take a variety of forms:

1. Hitting, punching, kicking etc
2. Throwing items or threats of violence
3. Inappropriate physical contact (e.g. handling children, mismanagement of classroom behaviour etc)

Such behaviour is likely to occur when the individual is unable to manage his/her own emotions at times of particular stress or challenge.

It can arise when a school lacks appropriate procedures and guidelines in handling and managing children in physical situations. In such a case, adequate training in appropriate methods to deal with such situations may not have been available.

The majority of physical abusers can be described as 'reactive' abusers. Their abuse is not usually planned and is not the expression of any deep malice, but is the outcome of a lack of self-restraint.

Much rarer are the 'pro-active', organised, possibly sadistic, physical abusers. Their abuse may also be sexual and is more likely to follow the pattern described earlier.

Indications that an applicant may have a tendency towards physical abuse may be revealed in references which may contain evidence of past incidents involving physical abuse.

In interview, the indicators for a physical abuser may include:

1. A lack of ability to manage conflict, or to cope with challenging behaviour

2. An inability to recognise or respect boundaries around physical contact, e.g. when physical intervention is appropriate and reasonable to restrain or control a pupil, and what kind and degree of intervention might be acceptable in different circumstances
3. A worldview in which physical violence is an acceptable solution to problems or disputes
4. An inflexible authoritarian approach to classroom discipline, or an unrealistic reliance on children's reasonableness
5. Poor classroom management and an inability to exercise appropriate control and discipline

Taking action to help prevent physical abuse

To reduce and minimise the possibility of incidents of physical abuse, schools must establish and implement clear procedures and guidelines about bullying, the management of difficult behaviour and the school's response to physical abuse. These should be embedded in the daily practice of staff. Pupils and parents must also know and understand the procedures. To achieve this requires persistent effort in 5 key areas.

Communication: The procedures and guidelines must be communicated to pupils, staff and parents in a way that changes behaviour. It is not enough just to write a report or announce the measures at a single staff meeting. They must be discussed, applied and reviewed. Incidents must be recorded, analysed and lessons learned.

Visibility: Procedures and guidelines need to be seen to be implemented in the classroom and playground. Appropriate behaviour should be demonstrated daily so it becomes the norm by which the behaviour at school can be judged by pupils, staff, parents and the community as a whole.

Understanding: Testing a person's understanding of procedures and guidelines cannot wait until they are put under the kind of pressure that may provoke, in some, a physically abusive response. Understanding arises from training, discussion and role-play that explore the range of possible reactions to provocative situations and equip teachers with a repertoire of responses with which to deal with them. By sharing their experiences, teachers can develop a better understanding of their colleagues' strategies for dealing with difficult classroom situations.

Evidence: Evidence of the success (or otherwise) of the safeguarding procedures and guidelines adopted by a school is necessary for the regular appraisal and review of the measures. This evidence can be drawn up from reports of incidents that have taken place over a given time. The lessons learned will serve to improve the adopted measures.

Checking: Schools must continually check that their procedures and guidelines are implemented.

Be wary

Sometimes, in genuinely trying to protect or support a pupil, a member of staff may display behaviour that could concern an observer. For example, a member of staff might:

1. Attempt to restrain a child and bruise the child's arms where they were held
2. Sit a child on their lap to comfort them after a bad playground fall

Staff need to be able to assess their behaviour in a situation from the point of view of an outsider e.g. a parent or governor, and avoid traps that they may innocently create for themselves.

Induction training should cover these issues and help staff gain awareness of how their behaviours may be interpreted and the proper procedures to follow in different situations.

Role models

For teachers, the principle is well established: they should be role models. They should not model their behaviour on that of the children, nor should they follow their lead. The same principle applies to other staff even though they do not have the same pupil/teacher relationship.

It is also important to recognise that overfamiliarity, or befriending behaviour, in some cases can be the start of a grooming process with older pupils.

Schools need to put in place guidelines and standards of behaviour that make clear the kinds of behaviour that are not acceptable.

It is an area that should be covered in induction and the behaviour should be addressed by senior management if it is displayed by a member of staff.

Is your school vulnerable?

There are some factors that can leave a school vulnerable to unsuitable individuals:

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The lack of a clear, confident and **actioned** safeguarding policy and procedures; for example, a safeguarding policy that is either just a book on a shelf or still in development

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Complacency about the likelihood of abuse happening in the school

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Feeling overwhelmed and helpless in the face of an important issue - the feeling that bad things happen all the time and nothing can be done

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A feeling of awkwardness or discomfort in the school about discussing safeguarding issues that leads to a lack of dialogue and openness about the subject

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